

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13

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R 230937Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1790

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA JAPAN

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

CINCUNC KOREA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 12710

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, POPS, JA, KS

SUBJECT: MORE TOKYO REACTION TO KOREAN DEVELOPMENTS

REF: TOKYO 12659

1. JAPANESE PRESS COMMENTARY ON PANMUNJOM MURDERS AND
SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS REMAINS REMARKABLY MILD. IN
ADDITION TO PRESS REACTION DESCRIBED IN REFTEL,
AUGUST 23 YOMIURI CARRIED EDITORIAL ENTITLED "GROWING
TENSION IN KOREA." EDITORIAL NOTED THAT "IT WAS
NO ACCIDENT OF TIMING" THAT PANMUNJOM INCIDENT CLOSELY
FOLLOWED INITIAL NORTH KOREAN FAILURE TO OBTAIN
NON-ALIGNED SUPPORT FOR RESOLUTION CALLING FOR US
TROOPS WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH KOREA AT COLOMBO NAM
SUMMIT AND SUBSEQUENT HURRIED INTRODUCTION OF SIMILAR
RESOLUTION AT UN. EDITORIAL STATED NORTH KOREAN
LACK OF SUCCESS AT COLOMBO INDICATED RECOGNITION BY
NON ALIGNED COUNTRIES THAT US TROOP PRESENCE HELPS
DETER CONFLICTS RATHER THAN INCREASE TENSION ON KOREAN
PENINSULA. AFTER CRITICIZING NORTH KOREAN
RESOLUTION AS UNREALISTIC, YOMIURI CONCLUDED: "IF
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NORTH KOREA SHOULD ATTEMPT TO HEIGHTEN TENSION TO GET

AN ADVANTAGEOUS POSITION IN THE UN, THIS WILL ONLY
SERVE TO SUBSTANTIATE THE SOUTH'S CLAIM OF A THREAT
FROM THE NORTH AS WELL AS MAKE THE PRESENT DIVISION OF
THE KOREAN PENINSULA UNCHANGEABLE."

2. ASAHI FINALLY GOT AROUND TO MENTIONING NORTH KOREA IN
AN EDITORIAL ON AUGUST 22, BUT ONLY TO AIR DIFFICULTIES
PYONGYANG HAVING IN MEETING COMMERCIAL OBLIGATIONS TO JAPAN.

3. REACTION WITHIN TOKYO'S DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY
HAS THUS FAR BEEN PREDICTABLE. (ONE OF OUR
COLLEAGUES FROM SINGAPORE SAID THAT NORTH KOREAN BEHAVIOR
AT COLOMBO AND PANMUNJOM ONLY CONFIRMED HIS VIEW OF THEM
AS "MADMEN.") MOST INTERESTING COMMENT HAS BEEN
THAT OF SOVIET POL COUNSELOR KOMARVSKY. AFTER RITUAL
OBSERVATION TO EMBOFF THAT BASIC CAUSE OF KOREAN
TENSION WAS PRESENCE OF US TROOPS, KOMAROVSKY EXPRESSED
HOPE INCIDENT WOULD BE PEACEFULLY SETTLED. HE SAID
HE FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT NORTH
KOREANS COULD HAVE INITIATED INCIDENT SINCE OUTCOME
WAS SO UNFAVORABLE TO THEIR CAUSE. WHEN EMBOFF
SUGGESTED THAT NORTH KOREAN BEHAVIOR IS OFTEN
DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN IN RATIONAL TERMS, KOMAROVSKY
DID NOT REPLY.

4. PANMUNJON INCIDENT FIGURED IN AUGUST 20 JAPAN
DEFENSE COUNCIL MEETING, WHERE PRESS REPORTED
CONSENSUS THAT IT WOULD NOT LEAD TO HOSTILITIES.
JAPAN DEFENSE AGENCY OFFICIALS SPECULATED TO EMBOFFS
THAT INCIDENT WAS NOT PLANNED, AT LEAST TO POINT OF
MURDER, EVEN THOUGH IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN INTENTION TO
PROVOKE US FORCEFUL REACTION WITH COLOMBO AND UN
IN MIND. VICE MINISTER OF JDA MARUYAMA SAID
HE THOUGHT KIM IL SUNG MAY WELL HAVE ALSO BEEN
CONCERNED WITH DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION. HE NOTED
KIM'S POINTED ABSENCE FROM COLOMBO AND WONDERED
WHETHER INCIDENT HAD NOT BEEN STAGED TO DIVERT
ATTENTION FROM INTERNAL POLITICAL DIVISIONS AND
ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES.

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